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SHARED LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

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THIS REPORT DESCRIBES A MULTIFACETED PROJECT TO PROVIDE INTERRACIAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCES TO WHITE AND NEGRO PUPILS IN THREE RACIALLY UNBALANCED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN AND AROUND DETROIT, MICHIGAN. AS PART OF A "PEN PAL" PROGRAM PUPILS IN AN INNER-CITY SCHOOL EXCHANGED LETTERS WITH PUPILS IN TWO PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SUBURBAN SCHOOLS. FIELD TRIP EXPERIENCES WERE SCHEDULED FOR THE PUPILS AND THEIR RACIALLY DIFFERENT PEN PALS, AND INTERSCHOOL VISITS WERE ARRANGED. IN SOME CLASSROOMS SPECIAL INTERDISCIPLINARY HUMAN RELATIONS UNITS WERE STUDIED. SUBURBAN AND INNER-CITY TEACHERS MET FREQUENTLY TO PLAN INTERGROUP ACTIVITIES FOR THEIR PUPILS, AND AT ONE SCHOOL AN EXCHANGE OF TEACHERS WAS CARRIED OUT. INSERVICE WORKSHOPS WERE INSTITUTED FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS, AND AN ALL-DAY EVALUATION SEMINAR, WHICH ALSO INVOLVED THE INNER-CITY AND SUBURBAN PARENTS, WAS CONDUCTED. IN GENERAL, IT IS FELT THAT THE PROJECT STIMULATED INNOVATIVE METHODS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING AND PROVIDED VALUABLE INTERRACIAL CONTACT FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS. TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS FELT THAT THE PEN PAL PROGRAM MOTIVATED PUPILS TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNICATION SKILLS. THE CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROJECT ARE DESCRIBED. (LB)

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SHARED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Wayne County Intermediate School District
Desegregation Advisory Project
1500 Guardian Building
Detroit, Michigan

A report prepared for the Wayne County Board of Education, Detroit, Michigan and the United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. ii

Section

I. PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE. 1

II. CHRONOLOGY. 7

III. CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS. 13

IV. PUBLICITY AND PRESS RELEASES. 16

V. EVALUATION. 21

Introduction
Reactions of the Parents
Reactions of Teachers
Reactions of the Principals

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS. 58

VII. CONCLUSIONS. 61

APPENDIX. 62

SECTION I.

PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

"For a dream cometh through
a multitude of business"

Ecclesiastes Chapter 5:3

No aspect of contemporary American society is of greater importance to the health and vitality of our nation than the problems concerning relations between Negro and white citizens. These problems must be faced and meaningful solutions must be found by our social institutions and, particularly, by schools. To look at the history of the Negro in America is to experience a sense of impatience; for more than a hundred years we have been unwilling to confront, to understand, and therefore, to solve the American dilemma. Dr. John Hope Franklin, in an article in the February, 1966 issue of The American Teacher, says,

> "I believe that one of the principle reasons why views of racial inequality persists in America and why the move toward achieving equality for all Americans is so slow is that we who teach have not assumed our full responsibility about ourselves and our history. We do all too little to dispel the distortions, the misunderstandings and the misrepresentations that make it impossible for us to have a clear picture of our social order and how it evolves."

Educators are, however, increasingly confronting the problem of providing quality integrated education for all children. It is refreshing that a critical look is being taken by school leadership people at some issues in education today: ghetto schools, both Negro and white, growing out of the sanctification of the neighborhood school concept; ability groupings (sometimes referred to as the track system) which tend to label certain children; the middle-class teacher, Negro or white, who has little or no sensitivity to the needs of the child who is different from himself.

We, as educators, have traditionally been reluctant to become involved in anything that appeared controversial. So if an issue seems to smack of a "civil rights" flavor we have avoided it. We have thrown up roadblocks by uttering such statements as:

> "We are educators, not politicians."
> "We are not agents of social change."
> "We reflect the needs and desire of our communities."
> "We have no Negroes so we have no problems."

Such utterances do not free us from the responsibility of equipping ourselves with the facts, the skills, the commitment necessary to provide a classroom climate conducive to the growth and maturation of the human personality—a personality that can be freed from the limitations imposed upon it by selfish, undemocratic behavior which has hampered our nation's potential from its birth.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has provided the funds whereby we can demonstrate the leadership so desperately needed to desegregate our schools in the north as well as in the south. One aspect of the federal program in Wayne County during the past school year has been the involvement of school leadership people in weekly half-day workshop sessions which provided an opportunity to explore, in depth, some of the areas of concern as they relate to desegregation and ultimately to integration. Such topics as The Concept of Race, The Neighborhood School, The Negro in American History, Case Studies in School Desegregation, have been studied. As a result of these workshop experiences there have been efforts to plan such action programs as recruitment of all qualified teachers; inclusion in recruitment materials of a forthright statement of a board "equal employment opportunity" policy; curriculum innovations, such as the adoption of textbooks which give consideration and representation to various racial and ethnic groups; the use of supplements to the conventional social studies programs; and the planning of shared learning experiences for children of suburban and urban school settings.

The ultimate objective of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and of the Desegregation Advisory Project is the integration of all schools. (See Appendix I.) But many of the educators who participate in our program work in school districts in which there are no, or at best, very few Negro students. Consequently, in our work in such areas, we have attempted to focus attention on affirmative programs that are possible and educationally sound. We have emphasized staff integration, revision of texts and curricula and methods of providing meaningful interaction between white and Negro teachers and pupils. The shared learning experiences approach, described in this report, is one such channel for bringing together teachers and children of differing racial groups and of differing socioeconomic backgrounds within each racial group.

Curriculum-based shared learning experiences must be viewed as only a substitute for the integrated learning environment that is desirable and would be possible if all children lived in integrated communities. However, it does serve to help "narrow the gap" between segregated living conditions and integrated living conditions so that children, teachers and parents can have opportunities through personal contacts to learn to respect, accept and appreciate people who are different from themselves. It cannot achieve as much in positive attitudes and behavior as true integrated living can achieve; but the results are real and valuable enough to justify the conscious effort and time involved in planning and carrying out the program and in providing in-service training to the participating school personnel. Whatever objectives are realized, whether small or great, they will move us a little closer to good human relations and good race relations.

The results of th[illegible]are of public elementary and secondary schools to confront the problems created by segregation are evident everywhere to those who will see and hear them. The following essay, written by a male Negro student in a large Michigan university brings this crucial problem into sharp focus.

> "There has long been controversy over the purpose and meaning of education in America. No matter how liberal or specialized one's background may be, one thing is certain: there seems to be no correlation between impressions obtained outside the school and formal learning. These two forces must necessarily affect the final product representing the educated youth, America's most valuable resource.
>
> "Universities throughout the country boast of decreased racial strife among students. This is particularly true in the large universities that have a Negro enrollment that represents greater than a token degree of integration. Yet, graduates of such schools are seldom familiar with the major problems of society through any degree of extensive course study or through contact with heterogenous groups and situations.
>
> "Close scrutiny of these graduates reveals a distressing picture of the new generation. It shows persons who have been deprived of experiences that would equip them to deal with the problems which confront our national well-being every day and which are bringing about major changes in everybody's way of life. The schools, even on the university level, make no effective attempt to break through a wall of ignorance which has grown out of a social system that smothers knowledge which creates change.
>
> "To illustrate this point through a recent factual account, consider an informal panel discussion held in a dormitory lounge at a Big 10 university. The panel, seated at a table at one end of the lounge, consisted of three men and two women, all of junior status and above, with better than 'B' university averages and curricular backgrounds ranging from science and math to sociology.
>
> "The first thing that caught the eye of the three Negro students who accidentally happened upon the scene was the presence of an all-white panel and an all-white audience despite the sign which boldly announced the topic, 'Interracial Marriage.' Despite the fact that there were five Negroes in the men's portion of the dormitory and ten Negroes in the women's portion, none had been asked to participate as a panel member or even to be present in the audience.

"The discussion began with an analysis of the problems that a white Catholic might have with a white Protestant in their marriage. It regressed into unrelated views on marriages between white couples from different countries.

"'Pardon me for interrupting,' said one of the students who had taken a seat in the front row, 'but it seems to me that this panel is avoiding entirely the proposed topic which is marriage between white people and black people.'

"Feeble attempts were made by several members of the panel to deny that race was an important factor or that skin color was relevant to the discussion. It was suggested that problems related to intermarriage were related to economics and to the social class rather than to race.

"College students who can be oblivious to the social revolution all around them, who cannot relate the murders in the south, the bombings, the ambushing, the harassment of American citizens for expressing a desire to vote, have a severe educational lag. If these acts of violence cannot be related in the minds of the intellectuals to the economic, political and social questions of our time, then these individuals are ill-prepared to accept positions of leadership in a country such as ours, a country whose life blood if being shed daily in an attempt to maintain its status as protector of freedom and democracy.

"Must we continue to bury our heads in the sand and refuse to recognize cause and effect relationships?"

Even the Negro who appears to have achieved success carries with him a burden of handicaps—suspicions, doubts, fears accumulated from a lifetime of ego-damaging experiences. Such a person is not, and cannot be, free unless freed by the society in which he lives. In this country today, what he learns in school and what he learns in his work all too often add to his burden. Following is a story of one such man. The question the educator must ask himself is whether he will continue to permit psychological and social enslavement to handicap yet another generation.

Jeremiah Reynard Watson was a medium built, medium height Negro of 36 with an overly concerned expression that seemed permanently fixed on his dark face.

He was not a poverty stricken youth and his family was able to keep him in school long enough for him to receive a bachelor of arts degree in business management. A casual onlooker might even say that this man had an easy go of it and, compared with many of his race, he had indeed.

But there is a different story to be told here. This problem is a product of the much talked about social mobility and emergence of what might be called a "new breed of Negro." It involves inner conflicts of an educated temperament struggling to defeat defeatism.

J.R., as he is commonly known, is a man of talent and drive that has not been unnoticed. Like many people of all races he has had a hard time getting everything that he values. He is a departmental manager at a large department store in a thriving northern metropolis. He has had great hope for promotion but presently he stands numb in thought and in action. Why?

J.R. was a star athlete in high school and it had long been his ambition to go to State on a football scholarship as a quarterback. He was a member of the all-state team selected by the wire services and newspapers.

When J.R. did not get this scholarship, it did not take long for people around him to convince him that colored boys don't quarterback at big schools so he might as well forget it.

This was the first time that he really felt the impact of helplessness in the face of the white power structure as he saw it. It was like being choked by an invisible hand. Whether or not his reason was valid, his mind was affected and a pattern was set that is not uncommon among Negroes. That feeling is one of helplessness and defeatism in the face of stagnation labeled "white barriers."

J.R. saw many of his white counterparts move up the ladder while he stood immobilized. Each time the picture was slightly different but the effect was the same.

He has worked long and hard to advance and in spite of the obstacles that have constantly hindered his climb, superficially at least, he has appeared to get what he wanted. If you asked him how he got ahead he would probably say, "I was lucky, I guess."

A vice-president's job at his particular department store pays $18,000 a year with untold benefits and prestige. The Board of Directors selects new members to the vice-presidency and rumor had it that J.R. Watson was first in line.

The only red light apparent is the one repeatedly flashed by a vice-president, a well-groomed man of 50 and a confirmed white supremist. He is a self-made man with a high school education and an unquestionable reputation for knowing his business. That his one dissenting voice has delayed J.R.'s promotion attests to his influence and power.

J.R. sits in his office turning the situation over in his mind. No pains have been taken to hide the truth of his situation from him.

J.R. is 36. He looks 46. He feels 146. He and his family will not starve and his story will not make headlines or history books. But J.R. has a son who is a freshman in high school. He too has drive, ambition, and likes to play quarterback.

SECTION II.

CHRONOLOGY

An uncommonly fertile set of circumstances triggered the Shared Learning Experiences. Mr. Richard Kirk, Principal of the Pattengill School, Detroit, sent to Mrs. Margaret Ashworth of the Desegregation Advisory Project staff a request for an exchange of "teachers, pupils and even parents." Since Mrs. Ashworth had formerly taught at Pattengill School, where she was known for her leadership in curriculum development and human relations activities, the Pattengill Human Relations Committee chairman, Miss Mary Green, and Mr. Kirk wrote to her on December 3, 1965 (see Appendices II. and III.) requesting help with planning and implementing some type of exchange program whereby teachers and/or pupils of the Pattengill School could be provided with educational experiences planned jointly with schools in the suburban areas.

On January 5, 1966, Mrs. Ashworth met with the Pattengill Human Relations Committee, Mr. Kirk, and Dr. Reed Hagen, Intercultural Coordinator serving that school. This group was given background information on the work of the Desegregation Advisory Project and the availability of services. Dr. Samuel M. Brownell, Superintendent, and Dr. Norman Drachler, Assistant Superintendent, Detroit Public Schools, both agreed that contact be made with an elementary school in the suburbs for joint planning of an exchange program which would be agreeable to both schools. This proposed program would be in accord with Detroit's pupil integration plan known as Project II. (see Appendix IV.).

This request was discussed with Mrs. Clare Broadhead and Dr. Edward Leibson, Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of the Desegregation Advisory Project, who recommended that the idea be discussed with Mrs. Joan Messer, Principal of the Stark School in Livonia and a participant in the ongoing Desegregation Advisory Project North County Workshop. Mrs. Messer expressed interest in this type of project and indicated that she would explore it with her staff. She thought there were three or four of her teachers who would probably like to be involved. However, she felt these developments should be reviewed with Mr. Benton Yates, the Superintendent, Livonia Public Schools.

Mr. Yates was contacted and there seemed to be no question in his mind as to the merit of such a plan. He said his administrative staff and teachers were extremely busy at the time and suggested that a planning session be scheduled in January. Meantime, Mildred Field, Principal of the Starkweather School in

Plymouth and a participant in the same North County Workshop, expressed interest in participating in the proposed program. Mrs. Ashworth, Mrs. Messer and Miss Field met on January 17 to make specific plans. The result was a meeting the following week with principals and volunteer teachers from both the Stark School and the Starkweather School from which definite plans to work with the Pattengill School developed. For these meetings and all subsequent planning sessions, the districts were reimbursed from Desegregation Advisory Project funds for all substitutes employed to release the teachers involved.

The first of three weekly half-day seminars for this group was held in Livonia on February 7 (see Appendices V. through VIII.) to establish goals, develop guidelines and designate specific plans of action. Present at this meeting in addition to Mrs. Ashworth and the teachers and administrators involved (see listing in Appendix IX.) were Dr. Reed Hagen and Dr. Henry Heusner, Director of Elementary Education, Livonia Public Schools.

A week later a second meeting was held at Pattengill School in Detroit. Dr. Frances Cousens, a sociologist affiliated with Wayne State University, discussed with the group "The Sociological Realities of the Pattengill Attendance Area" and Dr. Edward Fort, Curriculum Coordinator, Detroit Public Schools, explored "Curriculum Possibilities in a Shared Experience Program." (See Appendices IX. and X.) As interests and abilities became evident, the teachers paired themselves and specific plans began to emerge. The final planning seminar, involving all participants, was held in Plymouth on February 24. (See Appendix XI.) Meantime, and subsequently, the various teams scheduled their own planning sessions and met frequently to plan their curriculum-based activities.

Mrs. Jane Boissineau, Stark School, and Mrs. Mary Jo Neville, Pattengill, agreed to plan their work around the topic "In the Neighborhood," a Language Arts-Social Studies unit of study designed to broaden the children's horizons at the second and third grade level. When Mrs. Sherrill Hartsook, Starkweather School in Plymouth, joined with this group, an ideal situation was created for the study of the small town, big city and suburb. (See Appendix XII.)

A "Pen Pal" program was established among the children in the city school and the suburban schools with three exchanges of letters before they met in person. The first face-to-face contact was in Plymouth on March 31. Having previously studied about a small town, the children now took a good look. Accompanied by their pen pals, they walked through the center of the town and stopped at the police station and fire station before going to the school for lunch. Transportation difficulties, unfortunately, limited the amount of informal association originally planned but the half-day did provide a wholesome interracial experience and first-hand community study.

On April 29 a trip was taken to downtown Detroit which many of the children had never before visited. Points of interest, such as the Civic Center, were pointed out to them as they drove along. There was a visit to Fort Wayne and picnic lunch at Belle Isle. Again, they traveled with their pen pals.

The visit to the suburb of Livonia on May 27 afforded the opportunity to visit two large shopping centers, the Ford plant, and Fisher Body plant, two new theatres, several schools including Schoolcraft Community College, and the city hall where they were photographed with the mayor in his office. A visit to Mrs. Boissineau's home provided the opportunity to observe a residential community approximately three years old. Later they were able to compare this community with another Livonia housing development where underground utilities were being installed and homes were partially built.

The culminating activity took place at Kensington State Park where the children enjoyed a day together following the nature trails and picnicking.

In accordance with school policies, the permission of the parents was obtained and some of them accompained the children on the trips. The Pattengill Elementary School Human Relations Newsletter carried an article informing the parents of the program and soliciting their interest and support.

A second project, resulting from the half-day planning sessions, involved three fourth grade teachers, John Howe from Starkweather and Margaret Englehardt and Mrs. Delores Phillips from Pattengill. Based on the theme, "Michigan Our Michigan," it evolved around a study of the state's natural resources, industries, points of interest and famous historical personalities. Mr. Howe's children had two pen pals each selected from Miss Englehardt's and Mrs. Phillips's classes. An exchange of teachers was arranged so that Mr. Howe spent a half-day in each of the classrooms and the Pattengill teachers each taught his class in Plymouth.

When the Starkweather children visited Pattengill on May 13 and later in the month when Pattengill returned the visit, the host pupils performed short plays which they had developed for the unit.

The fourth grade field trip was a visit to Proud Lake conducted by Hartley Thornton, naturalist of the Michigan Conservation Center. In addition to the study situation, opportunity was provided for the children to know each other in an informal picnic-type setting, replete with food and games and good will.

Curriculum-based shared learning activities for fifth graders were planned by Anne Welch and Mrs. Jean Wernette from Starkweather; Mrs. Rhea Neubert from Stark; Gerald Goldsby and Mrs. Anna Collins from Pattengill. The theme selected by the teachers for this unit of work was, "Latin American Neighbors." The teachers arranged for pen pal letter exchanges as had been done by the previously mentioned units. Field trip experiences were shared

with these friends in Livonia and in Plymouth and at the International Institute in Detroit. The culmination was a tacos lunch prepared by mother of Mexican lineage in Plymouth.

Another project grew out of the desire of Mrs. Adina Rice, a fourth grade teacher at the Helen Farrand School in Plymouth, to plan some type of shared learning experience jointly with a fourth grade teacher in Detroit. Mrs. Rice had made this decision as a result of having been a participant in the North County Workshop conducted by the Desegregation Advisory Project. Mr. Russell Isbister, Superintendent of the Plymouth Schools, supported her request as he had the Starkweather program, and contact was made with Pattengill School in Detroit. Mrs. Vertell Patterson, a fourth grade teacher at Pattengill, was invited by her principal, Mr. Kirk, to work on this project. The two teachers met in a half-day planning session and agreed to sponsor a trip to the Detroit Historical Museum. The teachers proceeded with their plans in the following way:

At Mrs. Rice's request, one of the mothers polled parents of the Plymouth children who were to be involved, asking the parents' opinions about the proposed program. Of the parents contacted, 50% thought it fine; 2% were a bit reluctant, seemed resigned, "Well,we have to live"; and 48% trusted the teacher's judgment. Teachers met and paired students into three large groups taking into consideration size, interest and intelligence of the children. The students exchanged letters and pictures with partners. (See Appendix XIII.) Correspondence is continuing on a voluntary basis.

On March 31, the two classes toured the Detroit Historical Museum and had lunch together in a restaurant located a few blocks from the museum. Here the children were not seated as one group, but sought out places scattered throughout the restaurant attracting approving glances, helpful actions and interested questions from the adult customers who sensed something unusual was happening. (See Appendices XIV. and XV.) Because the children evinced the desire to spend more time together, the teachers arranged an outing for the children at Nankin Mills Nature Center on June 15. The teachers planned games, arts and crafts, sports activities, etc., as well as a tour of the Center and its museum.

A special project for a Rocket Club was initiated and planned cooperatively. Alexander Jefferson, a science teacher at Pattengill and Ronald Campau, a social studies teacher at Stark, planned to develop skills in such areas as electronics, mathematics, rocket design, writing and physics. This setting was designed to provide meaningful contacts and opportunity for interaction between Negro and white pupils. The teachers acted as advisors or sponsors with parental cooperation and supervision. Individual rocket kits complete with instructions and safety precautions were obtained from the National Science Foundation. After weeks of planning and hard work sustained by enthusiasm, the group was rewarded by a successful launching in June.

At various times during the year, teachers and principals involved in the Shared Learning Experiences program served as resource people at Desegregation Advisory Project workshops. A general meeting was held at Stout Junior High School in Dearborn, Michigan on May 23, at which Shared Learning Experiences participants reported their progress and radiated their enthusiasm to an audience of 70 interested educators. In this learning together seminar, a panel of participants discussed, "A Review and Discussion of Shared Learning Experiences." Dr. Rachel Weddington from Queens College, New York, spoke about "Shared Learning As I See It." Following on the heels of unfavorable publicity by an area newspaper, the first public opposition was voiced at this meeting.*

On June 4, all participants—administrators, teachers and parents who had been involved in the Shared Learning Experiences project met in an all-day evaluation seminar. (See Appendices XVI. and XVII.) A look was taken at the guiding philosophy of the program; a movie of one of the field trips was shown; personal experiences were shared; reports from the teams were given; and the possibility of continuation another year was explored. (See Appendix XVII.) Mrs. Bernadine Denning, one of three Intercultural Coordinators in Detroit and a person who had been supportive of the program during the year, acted as evaluator.**

This seminar highlighted divergent points of view on the purposes of education. Some white parents maintained the major concern of the schools should be academic achievement - the 3 R's. Other white parents, Negro parents and the teachers held to the philosophy that education is much broader - that in addition to acquiring academic skills, children must be taught to function effectively in society.

It was interesting that the direction taken by the two discussion groups was quite different. This was probably attributable to the fact that one chairman had experienced intensive involvement in problems incident to the desegregation of schools while the other had been on the periphery.

The leader who was most familiar with Shared Learning Experiences and who made clear at the outset his support for the project was able to lead the discussion in positive channels. The leader, who was less well-informed and somewhat uncomfortable with the subject, assumed the role of a "chairman," raising questions and calling on people to respond. His group became concerned with discussing the merits of the program, while the other group moved ahead into suggestions for improving and expanding it. This experience served to demonstrate how important it is to keep all members of a faculty in as close touch as possible with any program in operation.

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*Complete report in Section IV.

**Recommendations in Section VI.

As information about the Shared Learning Experiences program was disseminated, several other schools expressed interest in participating in similar projects. Several meetings of teachers and principals from suburban and Detroit school have been held to explore possibilities for future programs. Desegregation Advisory Project staff members have served as consultants, attending meetings, supplying speakers, interviewing interested educators and planning a fall workshop.

SECTION III.

CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS

The Desegregation Advisory Project is funded, under Title IV. of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to deal with "problems incident to the desegregation of the schools." The staff regards as one of the basic problems in Wayne County the lack of contact between white and Negro children, school personnel and citizens in general.* Because the Desegregation Advisory Project is mandated to direct its efforts to racial desegregation, the curriculum implications of the Shared Learning Experiences program have centered on interracial aspects and particularly on this need for communication between the races at all levels—pupils, teachers, administrators and parents.

In today's pluralistic society, a narrow view of curriculum, restricted to academic skills, no longer suffices. To prepare children to function productively in the world of today and tomorrow, what is required is what Dr. John I. Goodlad has called a "humanistic curriculum." Dr. Goodlad, in an address delivered at the annual conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in March, 1966, said that "If previous eras of curriculum development can be described legitimately as child-centered and society-centered, the present one can be described equally defensibly as subject or discipline centered," but that "our schools must move to the development of a humanistic curriculum," that is, one centered on human interests or values. Dr. Goodlad anticipates this development to make its appearance between 1990 and 2000. Clearly, the demands of our society require that we greatly accelerate this predicted rate of change.

The consultants, teachers and administrators involved in the Shared Learning Experiences projects take the position that a human rights-civil rights orientation must necessarily be an integral part of the day-to-day activities in the classroom. The Desegregation Advisory Project staff believes that discussions about race and about civil rights belong in the classroom; in this

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*A racial count of student populations and school personnel in Wayne County, conducted by the Desegregation Advisory Project staff in October, 1965, revealed that 99.7% of the Negro students attended schools in nine of the 42 local school districts (excluding Detroit). These same nine districts employ 97.2% of the Negro teachers in the county, excluding Detroit.

view, they are supported by a growing number of educators.* They hold, further, that it is the function of the school, and particularly of the classroom teacher, consciously to inculcate those democratic values enunciated in the Constitution of the United States. Today, the greatest domestic challenge to those values lies in the area of civil rights, specifically, relations among Negroes and whites. The Shared Learning Experiences program serves as an effective curricular tool in fostering the positive attitudes and behavioral patterns requisite to healthy relations between the races.

The teachers involved in shared learning programs had numerous opportunities to meet and communicate with each other. These were equal-status contacts among white and Negro teachers that focused on an area of common interest and involvement - that of planning their projects. Teachers were able to share ideas and materials, to stimulate and to learn from each other; they consistently expressed enthusiasm for this kind of "cross-fertilization" which can and does make them more effective in their own classrooms. A number of teachers, for example, found that multi-ethnic text and trade books were available, but that they must be requested, specifically, since some publishers, wittingly or unwittingly, do not promote such materials in all-white suburban communities. Some similarly discovered the wealth of material available through organizations such as the Urban League, the Anti-Defamation League, and the NAACP.

In addition to learning about new materials, teachers were sensitized to the inclusiveness of materials. Curricular materials - whether commercially produced or made by teachers or students - were critically examined and evaluated in terms of the extent to which they presented fairly the role of all groups in the development of our society in order to avoid building misconceptions and perpetuating stereotyped, mythical thinking.

In preparing the children for these shared experiences - experiences totally alien to many of the children - the teachers planned with their students. They discussed together the kinds of activities they might undertake and used these activities as the nucleus around which to build appropriate correlated units of work. For example, the scale model of their town made by a third grade suburban class involved mathematics and art as well as being related to the language arts-social studies aspects. Teachers discussed field trips with their classes and these discussions provided excellent material for use in an arithmetic lesson since children could calculate

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*The Detroit Free Press of Thursday, August 4, 1966 carries a report of several experiments in Massachusetts schools "in a project financed by the U.S. Office of Education to introduce race relations into the classroom." The study concludes: "Race makes a difference and should be taught about in school." The researchers observed that the "essence of democratic living is the right—the obligation—to be different. Learning about differences can be influenced. It can occur through special classroom experiences. The school can make a difference."

mileage, transportation costs, travel time, cost of lunches, etc. These discussions afforded an opportunity to introduce some social skills as well. One teacher, for example, listed some 15 or 20 questions centered on a visit to a cafeteria for lunch; these included such things as selecting food, how to pay for the meal and the like.

As the comments of the teachers and administrators demonstrate (see Section V.), the communication skills - writing, reading, speaking, thinking, listening - can be and were greatly strengthened, especially through the exchange of pen pal letters. Children who had previously shown little interest in letter writing or other creative writing were enthusiastic about communicating with their pen pals. Correct form, punctuation, spelling and grammar became needs to the children when they were writing <u>real</u> letters to children they knew.

The shared experiences gave teachers an opportunity to talk about differences among people, particularly racial differences, in a natural and matter-of-fact way. More important, they were able to talk with the children in a concrete manner about the many similarities among Negro and white children in terms of school activities, family, sports, hobbies, television programs, personality, etc.

The Shared Learning Experiences program apparently provided the stimulus for imaginative interdisciplinary approaches to teaching. While this is surely not a new approach, it appeared that the program pointed out the need for interdisciplinary planning of units of work in a meaningful way. The result was the expressed desire on the part of teachers for more such cooperative planning.

The in-service training of the participating teachers and administrators served to strengthen their commitment to the program, its rationale and its goals. Through study and discussion, existing prejudices and misconceptions were minimized, if not destroyed. Their involvement in the program brought them face-to-face with the problem of the disparity between their own definitions of education and those of some parents. While the educators regard the curriculum as including all of the planned experiences to which the child is exposed, many of the suburban parents define the curriculum purely in terms of academics. The need for a broad program of information to expound the widening philosophy of education in the 1960's became increasingly evident.

SECTION IV.

PUBLICITY AND PRESS RELEASES

The impact of the press on the community cannot be minimized, especially when a controversial subject is in question. Fair and objective reporting tends to allay fears and build community support while, on the other hand, slanted news reporting and distortions give rise to hysteria, fear and hostility. The Shared Learning Experiences Program has been exposed to both types of reporting.

One of the first news stories concerning the Shared Learning Experiences Program to appear in the press was the objective article of May 1, 1966 which appeared in the Detroit Free Press. Under the heading , "School Pen Pals Become Real Buddies After Visits," the Free Press staff writer, Mary Ann Weston, described the experiences of youngsters from the three schools taking part in a Shared Learning Experiences Program (study of communities). The article was accompanied by a large picture showing many of the children looking up at the camera, smiling broadly. The caption to the picture reads, "Hurrah for a day in Detroit yell pen pals from Detroit suburbs." The article contained illustrative excerpts from some of the pen pal letters. The program was described factually and some of the children were quoted as were Miss Mildred Field, principal of Plymouth's Starkweather School, and Mrs. Mary Jo Neville, a teacher at the Pattengill School in Detroit. The article identifies the Desegregation Advisory Committee of the Wayne County Intermediate School District as arranging the program. Because of the many quotations of things said by the children, the article contained much of what might be called "human interest." It was warm and sympathetic toward the Shared Learning Experiences Program.

During the month of May, a news release went out through the usual public information channels of the Wayne County Intermediate School District. Reports of this nature are regularly distributed to every one of the 43 school districts in the county and the news media throughout the area. The release was headed, "Desegregation Advisory Project To Discuss Shared Learning Experiences Of Detroit And Suburban Schools At Evening Seminar." It announced that Dr. Rachel Weddington, Assistant Professor of Education at Queens College, New York, would speak on, "Shared Learning Experiences," at the dinner meeting to be held on Monday, May 23, at 6:00 P.M. at Stout Junior High School in Dearborn, Michigan. The release contained the names and addresses of the four schools participating in the program. It also contained information stating that Mrs. Margaret Ashworth of the Desegregation Advisory Project and a panel of educators from the four schools would

discuss the Detroit-Suburban Shared Learning Project for the educators and school board members who would attend the meeting. The Desegregation Advisory Project office telephone number was given for those who wished to make reservations.

On the day of the meeting, the Desegregation Advisory Project staff received several telephone calls from people who were not directly connected with schools but who identified themselves as members of "homeowners" groups.* They asked if the meeting was open, if they could attend. The response was that the meeting had been called primarily for school people but if interested citizens wished to attend, they could. The staff discovered later that plans were being made to picket the meeting if the answer had been that the meeting was closed to citizens.

On May 19, there appeared in The Livonia News an article headed, "Stark School Integration Experiments Planned; Seek Homes for 100 Negroes." There followed a brief description of the meeting which was to be held at the Stout Junior High School. The article stated erroneously, "Pupils at the Livonia Stark School will be involved in a project of transfer to colored areas in Detroit and transfer of Detroit Negro pupils to the Livonia area according to plan previously announced." Then separated from this portion of the article by three asterisks was a second misstated article included as a part of the first. It reported inaccurately that the Livonia Human Relations Council was actively seeking to move 100 Negro families from the inner core of Detroit into the Livonia area. The same paper contained an article headed, "Group Getting More Active For Negro Homes In Area." Above the heading was the line, "'Storm Troopers' Aim To Bypass Realty Firms." These sensational headlines created panic and confusion. Although this article explains in more detail that the Livonia Human Relations Council was working with a similar group in Detroit to arrange for a listing of homes for sale in Livonia to Negro buyers, it erroneously indicates that the purpose was to bypass real estate companies and save the Negroes the commission ordinarily paid. By listing by name, address, and phone number the four local people in Livonia, Farmington, Plymouth, and Redford Township who were sponsors of the program, the paper provided the impetus for harassment of these families.

By including these two reports in the same article, the newspaper managed to connect two entirely separate projects. By implication and distortion of facts, people were led to believe that the federal government was instigating a mass movement of children from the suburbs to the inner city and vice versa for an extended length of time and that the Livonia Human Relations Council was planning a mass movement of Negroes into the community.

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*In this area, such groups are usually identified with efforts to maintain the homogenity—especially racial—of the neighborhoods in which they function.

The truth of the matter is that several citizens did attend the meeting at Stout Junior High School. The four men who spoke during the discussion period apparently were not seeking information. They were intent upon criticizing the right of the federal government to promote such a program as had been explained. To the best of our knowledge, none of them was a parent of any of the children involved.

One man stated that he did not care to have his family involved in any kind of racially mixed activity—that he had moved to the suburbs some years ago to escape Negroes and was not interested in anything which would change the all-white suburb. Another man criticized the "secrecy" of the project. The reply to him was that the usual news release issued by the Wayne County Intermediate School District to disseminate information about programs in the county was used. Since the shared learning experiences were educational in nature, they were treated in the same manner as any other program.

No explanations were acceptable to these men who insisted upon stating their objections to any federally-funded programs which disturbed the status quo.

Following the meeting, however, there appeared in The Redford Record for Thursday, May 26, a one-page headline, "Outlying Pen Pal Plan For Pushing Integration," and above this the line, "First Comes Letter To, With Meeting Strange Pal, Then Picnic Together & Closer Association (Federal Funds Assisting)." An emotion-packed article, two columns wide and subheaded, "Step-by-step Scheme Unfolded At Stout School By New Group—Link Program With 1 Detroit, 1 Livonia & 2 Plymouth Schools," is an example of reporting designed to inflame a community. The lead paragraph, "How the suburbs neighboring Detroit are going to be integrated by teaching primary school children with 'shared learning' experiences with Detroit area Negro youngsters was explained at a meeting Monday. The meeting was sponsored by the Wayne County Intermediate School District." The second paragraph of the article: "Speaker Rachel Weddington, negress (sic) assistant professor of education at Queens College in New York, told the sparsely attended session that it is up to, 'dedicated teachers with a cause' to see to it that the racial balance of residential communities is more favorable to negroes (sic). She spoke of negro-ghettos (sic), white-ghettos, and of an all-negro (sic) high-income area in California as a 'guilded ghetto.'" Further into the article, there appears under the heading, "How Integration Pattern Will Be Developed":

> "The precise pattern by which third, fourth and fifth grade students will be introduced to integration was described by the teachers and school officials at the conference.
>
> "First, the youngsters will be told about the differences in human beings, such as boys being different from girls, and how boys and girls can still be friends even though they aren't physically alike. Then the education of the youngsters will branch off into other things such as ethnic differences."

The article included information stating that about 15 parents from Livonia and several from Dearborn had appeared at the meeting at Stout Junior High and clearly implied that all 15 were in strong opposition to the program. At this point it should be made clear that both of these newspapers, The Redford Record and The Livonia News, are weeklies published by the same firm and given wide circulation in this part of the county. The editorial policy of both papers is ultra-conservative and viewed by many as racist in its approach.

On Wednesday, May 25, there appeared in The Livonia Observer, a third local newspaper, an article headed, "School Board Explains Integrated Field Trips." It described the integrated field trips as a program of cultural exchange involving pupils from Livonia, Plymouth, and Detroit, both Negro and white. Livonia School Board members were pictured as "scurrying to their telephones to explain there is no cause for concern." The first article is factual in content and generally neutral in its position as to whether it supports or disapproves of the Shared Learning Experiences Program. However, subsequent articles and editorials reflect support.

The Detroit News, in its section on suburban news, on Thursday, June 9, carried a lengthy article spread across eight columns, headed, "Field Trip Helps Fight Bias—Livonia Plays Host To Negro, White Children." There is a large picture of the mayor of Livonia in his office surrounded by children from the three schools taking part in the field trip. Everyone in the picture is smiling. Morgan O'Leary's article is supportive of the program and sympathetic in content.

Then, on Thursday, June 16, following the Livonia Board meeting, The Detroit News carried an article headed, "Punch Climaxes Livonia Row On Desegregation—School Project Ripped." It begins, "A stormy protest by about 100 Livonia residents against an experimental desegregation project in the suburbs schools ended last night when one irate citizen punched another in the eye.

"The altercation came during a Livonia School Board discussion of a program sponsored by the Wayne County Desegregation Project." The protesting residents were so unruly that the school board president warned that she would adjourn the meeting unless the protesters acted courteously. Then the altercation erupted resulting in one man being punched and receiving a large cut over one eye. The unruly audience and the resultant altercation arose from lack of accurate information fanned by sensational newspaper headlines and articles filled with half truths previously published in The Livonia News and The Redford Record and seized upon by ultraconservative members of the community bent upon maintaining the status quo.

"Dig Out More Facts In Schemed Livonia Race Mixing" was the headline in the June 23 issue of The Livonia News. The lead two-column-wide article began with "School Board Head, Mrs. Schreiber, Backs Yates; Knock-Down Battle Erupts When 'Friendly Integrator' Insults Lady." The article which was given two-fifths of the front page (Tabloid size) and continued on most of page two was written in the same negative manner as previous accounts.

On June 20, The Livonia News carried an article about a new organization known as CONE, standing for "Committee Opposing Nationalization of Education." Its avowed purpose is

> "to oppose Federal Government intervention in the operation of local schools in reaction to the controversial Wayne County Desegregation Project recently activated in Livonia, Plymouth and Detroit schools under Federal guidance and financing."

The aforementioned articles and the resulting reaction of the public to them raise the question of the relation of the innovative educator to a hostile press. It is ironic that such an innocent, non-threatening program as Shared Learning Experiences should raise the specter of open occupancy and drive people to open protest.

In the opinion of the staff there are three distinct elements relating to the manner in which news media carried and described the story of the Shared Learning Experiences Program. First, there is the usual news release from the Wayne County Office. This ordinarily is skeletal in content but contains an address and telephone number so that those interested in obtaining additional information may do so.

Second, two of the weekly community newspapers have been strongly in opposition to the Shared Learning Experiences Program. This becomes evident in the manner of reporting and in what they choose to say and what they choose to omit. The third weekly has generally reported in an unbiased manner, giving space to the pros and cons.

Third, the two major metropolitan papers have been somewhat supportive in describing the Shared Learning Experiences Program. They have tended to treat the stories as "human interest" articles without attempting to arouse fears and antagonisms.

SECTION V.

EVALUATION

Introduction

Because of the methodological difficulties of devising quantitative measures, it was decided that the procedures to be used in evaluating the Shared Learning Experiences program would be confined to broad, general, qualitative impressions. To obtain these, interviews were conducted with all three of the administrators and with fourteen of the teachers involved in individual programs. In addition, one student teacher and twenty-three parents were interviewed. All but four of the parents were selected by those members of the faculties of the schools who were actively engaged in shared learning projects. The school personnel were instructed to make every effort to have the parent interviews fairly representative; that is, to avoid having all of the parents either favorable or unfavorable. As it turned out, most of the parents selected were in favor of the projects. The four parents referred to above, who were opposed to the project, appeared when the interviewer was at the school in Plymouth and these, too, were interviewed. Clearly, no claims are made that the views expressed by either parents or faculty are representative. Each of the interviews was taped, transcribed, and then categorized in terms of a number of areas of information. (See Appendix XVIII. for interview schedules.) The areas of most significance were:

1. How the person (teacher, principal or parent) became involved with or informed about the project;

2. How the teachers informed their pupils about the project and the kind of preparation that was done;

3. Perceptions of the childrens' reactions to the program;

4. In the case of faculty, perceptions of parental reactions and the reactions of staff members not immediately involved in the projects;

5. Whether the programs were perceived as having any educational value;

6. Whether the programs were perceived as contributing to improving the relationships of children from different racial and perhaps socioeconomic backgrounds;

7. Problems encountered and suggestions for improving future projects of this type.

Since none of the children involved in the programs was interviewed, their reactions must be inferred from the information obtained from their teachers, principals and parents. It was reasoned that it would be difficult and time-consuming to interview the children and that the possibility of eliciting reliable and meaningful data would be rather slight.

The interviews generally took 45 minutes to an hour; a few were over an hour in length. The interviews were all conducted by members of the Desegregation Advisory Project staff, except for those interviews with parents of children attending the Pattengill school. In order to avoid the possibility of introducing an additional element of interviewer bias, it was decided that these interviews should be conducted by a Negro interviewer who had not been intimately involved with the program. Since these requirements excluded members of the Advisory Project staff, the Pattengill parents were interviewed by Mrs. Zeline Richard, Director of Physical Education at Pattengill school. For her invaluable help and gracious cooperation, the Desegregation Advisory Project is deeply grateful.

Reactions of the Parents

How Parents Were Informed of the Projects

The manner in which the parents of children involved in the projects were notified of the program varied from school to school. In all instances, the exchange of pen pal letters had begun before parents were told about the projects. At the Pattengill school, for example, letters were sent home to the parents by way of the children informing them in general terms of the program and eliciting their cooperation. At the Stark school, there were both communications to the parents of all children who participated and, in the case of the second-third grade project on the community, there was a tea for the parents at which the children, who were also at the tea, presented some of the initial work that they had done on their project. Specifically, the children had prepared a map of their own community to scale, and this was displayed to the parents at the same time the program was explained to them. At the request of the teacher at the Farrand school, two room mothers conducted a poll of parents as to their reactions to the proposed program. The results of this poll are noted elsewhere. (See page 10.)

At the Starkweather school, there was no formal contact with parents until it became evident that a good deal of misinformation about the project was circulating in the community. (See page 54.) In the words of the principal,

> "I felt at that time (when the children began writing pen pal letters to the children at Pattengill and Stark schools) no need to notify the parents of the project because I felt that it was just like anything else we studied—United States history, colonialization, two and two are four, and all of the other things we teach in our school. After the project was started, the erroneous opinion went around the community that we were planning to bus our children into Pattengill school for a full day's work everyday; that their children in turn were going to be sent out here by busses. When I learned of this, we sent out 113 invitations to the parents of children involved in the project inviting them to come to the school to hear about it."

Field trips are not unusual in this school and the principal has consistently said that she regarded this as an ordinary field trip not requiring any particular attention insofar as parents were concerned.

Of course, in all schools, written parental permission must be obtained before the child can be taken on any field trip. Where parent-teacher conferences occurred during the course of the project, these conferences were used as a channel for informing the parents about this program.

Reactions of Plymouth Parents

Of a total of nine parents who were interviewed at the Starkweather school in Plymouth, four were negative in their comments. The basic objections to the program seem to revolve around one or more of the following areas:

1. That the parents had not been adequately informed; that the projects were being conducted in a secretive, underhanded manner.

2. That the program had little value; that it was an improper expenditure of funds. (Here, there is an underlying current questioning the use of federal funds for such a project. This was not always specified in the interviews, but because of the kind of newspaper publicity in the Plymouth-Livonia area which developed at the time that these interviews were being conducted, there is every reason to believe that this was a major concern.)

3. That this was a program that was being "pushed down the throats" of the community.

4. That this kind of program is not a proper function of the school.

5. That this was the opening wedge in a program to accomplish "forced" integration of the suburban schools.

The parents who were opposed to the project became involved in interviews on their own initiative. Apparently, a mother of a child at the Starkweather school had called other parents who were also opposed to the program and suggested that they come to the school to "find out what was going on." (This was while the interviewing was being conducted with parents at the school.) A husband and wife, who came and spoke with the interviewer, would not permit their remarks to be taped; consequently, we must rely on the interviewer's notes. Essentially, this couple felt that "moral problems are not the school's business; the federal government is telling people how to raise their children." These people are from the South and they "know the problem." In their words, "Negroes have a lot to learn." The whole thing was pushed on the parents; according to them, no one volunteered for it. "You were given a choice—go along or keep your child at home." They raised questions about why the project was being conducted. Specifically they asked,

"Is the government preparing for integration of Plymouth with the new Ford plant?" (This refers to a newly-constructed automotive facility.) They said, "We would not let our children participate. The schools should stick to school subjects."

One parent began her interview by saying,

> "We are not prejudiced in our home whatsoever about race or religion, but I feel this is being shoved down our throats. And for what my son got out of it the other day, I feel he didn't get much out of it ... He liked the bus ride and that was it ... He says it was no different from any other trip they have taken. He said he saw as many colored there as he saw at the Art Institute and every other place he said they had gone, and I don't think he got much out of it, I really don't. It was just a novelty. Who can make friendships in a couple of hours? I think the money could be spent better elsewhere, I really do."

She adds further that, "I feel we are getting a more prejudiced reaction by pushing this with the parents than if it would just be lying to rest." She indicates that she heard about the program in a direct conversation with the principal, having been unable to attend the meeting called by the school to explain the Shared Learning Experiences. At that time, she said,

> "I didn't think that it was going to accomplish that much, but I was willing to go along with it as long as it was not a large involvement with the children being together all day at their school ... I don't feel that an entire school, their school, or our school, are ready for it. I do not feel it should be on a large scale. Getting together, being able to respect their wishes and being able to respect our wishes, yes."

When it was pointed out by the interviewer that it was his understanding that the whole school was not involved, she disagreed, saying,

> "It involved most of the school that I know of here. They were out here on the playground, they had been through our school, they had been through our town. My kindergartner has had a colored teacher in her room, and I believe my second-grader has, and I know my fifth-grader has."

She makes clear that a basic objection to the program revolves around the question of the children visiting the Pattengill school. She says,

> "I draw the line at visiting the school because I don't feel the children are really adjusted for it. I really don't ... There are as many colored people that despise us as there are white people that despise the colored ... I feel this way, let them accept us, they have to learn to accept us, too. They are getting a superior attitude now. They don't want to be equal because they are getting superior."

She feels that this is an area in which government should not become involved, saying,

> "I feel the government is overstepping itself. I really do. I feel like it is way overstepping itself. As far as the money is concerned, they need the money and I think they should do a little bit better than this. I feel they should. You have to get to know a person as an individual, not as a group."

Moreover, she feels that this is not a problem with which schools should be concerned. She says,

> "If a family should move into the community, then I think a program should go into this school to help the mixture. But other than that, I don't feel like bringing the schools together. We don't exchange, even with our own people."

A parent of two children at the Starkweather school based her opposition on the fact that she was not adequately informed. She said that another parent had called her asking about the exchange of letters. She maintained that she had no information about this and called the principal and several others at the school and "They told us it was something that was supposed to be done." When the meeting of parents was called at the Starkweather school, she said that the parents who attended

> "wanted to know who this was put on by, what it was for. And we were informed that it was a state thing, that all of the schools participated in it. That it was given to us to do and that was it. But if we didn't care to have our children in it, why, we could just keep them home on the days of the trip."

She says that is all she knew about the program until she began reading about it in the newspapers; that her son was singularly uninformative; and that, even when she tried to get some information from him, all he told her was the children were going to "swap projects" and "write letters." Her evaluation is as follows:

> "I really don't care for it. I am not in favor of it and I think its really a waste of time. They are going to meet each other and be integrated just in normal living. We

visit Detroit and I have family that live there, and they are not too far from all different nationalities, and they get to know them, and I think, myself, that's good enough."

The so-called secretiveness about the project and the manner in which it was handled are the prime bases on which her opposition is based. She said,

"Well, mainly it was just the way it was done. It seemed underhanded. If they would have explained it at PTA and asked our opinion instead of pushing it down our throat. They have the attitude of you just do it or keep the kids home. I mean that is what I object to. And at that meeting, they said no one volunteered for it, it was pushed on them at school, and that is all we could believe until we found out different."

The lack of parental involvement and the lack of information about the program was emphasized by still another parent who had a child in the first grade, but no children who had been involved in the program.

"They didn't bring it up at the PTA or any of the meetings we have gone to ... They called a meeting from three to four (referring to time) which means a lot of mothers are working and they didn't show up, and we were kind of cut off by the principal when we asked questions."

She felt that the secretiveness extended to the school itself, saying,

"It seems like none of the teachers on the first floor that don't participate know anything about the program and it's pretty underhanded the way it's going." She can't see "any reason in the program, in the bus trips back and forth like we are doing, and this pen pals ... If my child was in that room, I certainly don't want a pen pal like that because it's not necessary as far as I am concerned ... That was real sneaky, too, because the children didn't know they were colored children they were writing to in the first place."

She emphasizes something of an element of pressure by the teachers, saying that,

"They (referring to the children) like their teachers here and the kids don't want to cross the teachers, but they are not telling their parents anything, so I don't know. I think they are pushing too hard, and I think the principal was wrong in the first place for not letting parents of every room know that she was having this program..."

Transporting the children on the trips apparently is an element that causes this person some disturbance. She says,

> "I am not against the colored, really, if they come, but why bus them in? Is that what it is going to come to—bussing our children out and bussing them in because we don't have any colored in town right now? I don't think, I don't know. That is the only reason I am mad, is because we didn't know anything about this."

To another mother at the Starkweather school, the project raised the possibility of intermarriage. She began her interview by saying,

> "I have just one question. Why do all of these things have to be with the colored? How come so many different trips? Why can't they just have one trip with them and then forget it instead of all of them? They are pushing it so hard I can't even reason with my daughter anymore ... Well, she thinks she is going to go down there and marry the colored and everything."

When the interviewer questioned this statement, the mother replied, "Well, that's what she told me. She told me that if she met a nice one she would marry him."

This parent objected to the letter writing:

> "I don't know what they are saying to them in class; I think they are pushing it too far. I didn't know she was writing the colored. I told her I didn't want her writing. I didn't want them to have my address because some of them are so pushy and everything; some of them would probably come out. She is not writing anymore..."

Interestingly enough, this parent had accompanied the children from the Starkweather school on their visit to the Pattengill school. She said, with reference to the Pattengill children,

> "They were real nice children and everything, but I don't believe in marrying a different color and pushing them together and everything like that. If they are going to move out here, fine. But I don't believe in bussing them out here to be with them."

To her, the shared learning experience had no value.

> "I don't see where they are learning anything ... I think that the money they spent on that should be used for something around the school instead of that. These kids need playground equipment ... Really, I don't see nothing in it. I don't see what it's doing. Just going uptown, walking around and stuff like that didn't do nothing ... I think the kids are here to learn, not to find out what everybody else is doing."

She sees the project as having a negative effect on her child and cites this example:

> "My boy, he's never called them niggers before, but since this has been going, I have been having a hard time keeping him from calling them that. I don't know where he heard it because we don't call them that in the home ... It's really getting the children confused about things."

This, despite the fact that she indicates her son said he had a "nice pen pal" and he "enjoyed it (the trip) but he could see colored anywhere." She indicates that if it were really necessary, "one trip would be fine ..." but "I don't think they are of any help at all. But if they have to do it, then one trip and then that's it." She raises the question of why the Starkweather school is, in her words, "the only school involved" and offers the hypothesis that it is "because this is a low grade school, is that why?" She indicates that this is what

> "we have been told by one teacher. I'm not mentioning names, but that if what we were told. Now, I wasn't told, but a friend of mine was told, that it had to start, and they said we would be the first one to get the coloreds out here because we are in the lower grade of town. So I don't know. I don't think they ought to have it myself."

She concludes her remarks with this statement:

> "...I heard that area, Pattengill...is one of the roughest neighborhoods there is, and that is why I didn't want mine going down there. I let them go but I didn't want them to. I am afraid that this is going to have something to do with their grades. The teachers are going to hold it against them if they don't participate in this, because they told one grade that if they didn't go on the trip with the colored school they couldn't go on the other trips. And in my boy's room, I guess they finally let him go on the last trip even if they didn't go on the other trip. And I don't think that's right; that's showing partiality to the colored, isn't it?"

The fact that all of the parents who expressed negative comments had children in the Starkweather school raises the question of whether or not the kind of parental involvement or lack of it at the Starkweather school was related to the negative reactions. It must be noted, however, that these interviews took place after some of the previously mentioned adverse publicity had occurred. Whether there would have been less adverse reaction had there been greater parental involvement and more information disseminated about the project prior to its getting underway is a question about which we can only hypothesize.

However, even one of the parents who had no strong objections to the project was critical of the school because of the manner in which the program was initiated. She said she first learned of the project through a friend who has a child in the Stark school in Livonia, When she was informed about the program being conducted in Plymouth as well, she said,

> "I was surprised, naturally, to realize that the program was all set up before the parents had been notified of it, and I also found out at that time that they had been corresponding with the children at the Pattengill school."

It was not until about a week later that her son mentioned his pen pal and said that he was writing to some children in a Detroit school. "But at that time he didn't know that they were colored." She said,

> "I kind of feel that the parents should have been notified, although my husband and I were talking about it and he mentioned 'Well, had they notified the parents they probably would have gotten thumbs down on it completely before they even got started.'"

She feels, too, that the teachers, perhaps, should have explained to the children at the Starkweather school earlier in the project that these were Negro boys and girls to whom they were writing. She said her son found out that they were Negro children by the "names" of the children. Nevertheless, she feels that this

> "was an enlightening program to him. It was to me also ... I think he was quite impressed by their school. They have a very nice building and he said that he had a chance to talk with the two pen pals whom he had been corresponding with and said they had much the same hobbies that he did and he was a little enthused that the boy enjoyed baseball the same as he did..."

She believes only a small number of parents actually opposed the Shared Learning program. These were the parents, she said, who attended the meeting at which the project was explained; she felt that some of the parents, as a result of the meeting, changed their minds about the program and decided to permit their children to participate.

She says she would not object to her son continuing in an exchange program provided it were "only two visits a year." When she was asked how she would feel about a prolonged exchange program, she said,

> "I feel there would be a lot of complication. There would be the bussing situation. And of course staying in there with the children all day long. I am sure there would be, well, feeling from within there toward the white children. I think it would be a big step."

Though she concedes there would be opposition to an exchange program for a week at a time, for example, she sees merit in this and thinks that it might possibly be started on a limited basis. Her comments conclude with this remark:

> "They (the Starkweather children) learned something of the way of the colored children and what they are doing, the way they live. I think that they found out that they are very much a part of their life too, the way they live ... He (her son) was very open about it that night and was enthused over it. He felt he had learned what the other children had been doing and how they were living, and their education was very much the same as his was."

One mother says,

> "...I thought that this was a good experience ... I think Susan was given a visual example that all people are the same; have the same interests; do the same things; live their lives no matter what their religion or race is. Some interests are different, many are the same. I feel her experience has been enriched by this contact."

Another mother said that her son "seems to be so enthusiastic about it." She described her son's reaction as follows:

> "He seemed very much in favor of it. He liked the idea and came home with a couple of letters he had received from his pen pals. He said he had two pen pals in Detroit schools and that sometime soon he would be going to visit the schools."

She indicated that he knew these were Negro children and

> "was still very enthusiastic. Next they visited the school and when Dale came home he told me about it and he said he got to meet his pen pal and he was very pleased about that. He told me that in four days they would be coming to visit our school. He told me I was invited but I couldn't make it. 'My pen pals were there,' he said, 'you could have met them.'...I think he has received one or two letters from each of them and one boy is in Cub Scouts. So is Dale, so they had this in common. He has two pen pals at Pattengill; one is a girl and one a boy."

Another mother accompanied her daughter and the other children on their visit to the International Institute. She said the children "actually worked in a group situation together with no problems at all and I would say the whole day was very, very successful." With reference to her daughter, she says,

> "she enjoyed meeting the children from the other schools and she had a very interesting letter from her pen pal at Pattengill. It was beautifully written and my daughter answered it."

At the same time, however, she says she doesn't really know that it would matter to her daughter whether or not she would have another such experience. She said, "she certainly wouldn't be against it. She would probably enjoy another experience like this."

A mother of twins who works says that her boys save up news until she comes home and that she

> "...was not through the door when they said, 'Mother, did we have a ball today!' They were really very, very enthusiastic about their visit into town last week and discussed it in some detail, the kind of things that happened and the children that they had met. One was impressed by the fact that his pen pal had been bat boy for the Tigers. They enjoyed mutual interests in baseball. They mentioned the dance program they had visited and they had had a chance to sit with the children and talk with them--with the children they had written to and who had written to them. This they thought was fine. They enjoyed the personal contacts at the meeting... the twins still speak of this experience when something reminds one of it. We drove past the Art Institute area and they referred to their visit. Whenever any reminder comes, they speak of it."

She summarized her feeling about the project as follows:

> "I feel my children benefited from this experience. I have an older son who attended an integrated school in Detroit. I like Plymouth but sometimes one gets the feeling that it is a bit too insulated. My time and contacts are restricted... So when my children can have this kind of thing, I'm all for it because if they can't get as much from me on the family level, than I think it imperative that they get it another way. They do have contact with Chinese and Jewish children but not with Negro."

Because the trip to the Detroit Historical Museum differed somewhat from the other programs, the reactions of parents of the children involved in this aspect of the program will be considered separately. Two parents were interviewed. Both indicated that they got their first information about the project from the teacher at the school and they were both in favor of it. (These were the same parents who conducted the poll of other parents referred to earlier; See page 10.) While both indicated that their children enjoyed exchanging pen pal letters and enjoyed the trip, one of the mothers was somewhat critical. She felt that not enough time was provided during the visit to the museum for the children to "socialize." She noted, too, that in the public cafeteria at lunch time, the children tended to sit with their own classmates. (Special arrangements had not been made for the children to sit in one section of the restaurant.) The other mother, on the contrary, said she felt her daughter got to know her pen pal as a person and as a friend and "they (the teachers) did a real good job of paving the way before they (the children) even went in." Both mothers were enthusiastic about the picnic which the children took part later in the year. Note that the picnic was not part of the original plan but was an outgrowth of the first meeting of the children when some children complained that they "hadn't had enough time together." The mothers said that this was a "much more natural" experience; that the children had enjoyed the activities and that at lunch many of the children sat with their pen pals.

One mother stressed the importance of the pen pal letters and the photographs that had been exchanged by the children as a means of introducing them to each other. She summed up her reaction by saying that she thought that this program was "an excellent way for children to know each other. I would recommend similar programs for all sorts of children from different backgrounds." And she notes that studies which fall into the normal curriculum are "the way to do it."

The second mother suggested that some joint activity would be a good idea. She said that the children "ought to be doing something together—it should be something that was physically active and in cooperation."

For this reason she felt that the baseball game at the picnic was "great." She favors some academic content if, at the same time, the children can be active in some physical sense, for example, "in making things together." She said she would "actively push for a repetition or improvement and would do anything I could to help."

Reactions of Pattengill Parents

All of the parents of children attending the Pattengill school who were interviewed were both supportive and enthusiastic about the project. They made comments such as the following:

> "I think it is a big project and has good possibilities. I think the kids will enjoy it and learn from it. It will be a good experience to mix with other races of children, with Caucasian boys and girls ... I think it's nice to learn to get along with other people and understand them better. I think he (her son) can adjust better and learn to get along with other people."

> "...I think it's wonderful because listening to what he had to say, I think he learns from it, and I learned something from it. I think it's just wonderful."

> "I feel that this is really something that should be done, not just now but continued, because it gives our children a chance to know each other's lives and thoughts about each other. We are all alike and it's not just a racial thing."

> "I think we should continue it on the elementary level because children understand better when they are younger. They don't have any prejudice at all when they are young. If they have been taught not to have prejudice, it will not be in them. I think the project is a good idea; it gives the children a better chance to understand each other. They learn their ways; they see how each is progressing in their own work."

One or two parents expressed the view that parental opposition was more likely to be found among white than Negro parents. They felt, too, that their children had all enjoyed the shared learning experiences and that they had gained something from them. One woman, with reference to her daughter, said,

> "She liked it very much, she really did. She told me the children came to the classrooms and they also shared different experiences, and she liked it very much. She is looking forward to visiting them (the suburban children)... My

daughter told me that the Pattengill children enjoyed them very much and that they were very warm toward them. They would love to have them again."

Another parent says,

"My son is in this class that had pen pals with the other school, and he was quite excited about the letters that were sent to him ... And he was comparing the sentence structure and the different classes they had together. And he thought it quite a nice idea. And I really got quite a kick out of reading the letters, too."

A third parent describes her son as being

"very excited about the trip, and I think he really enjoyed it. It was a wonderful idea. He went on the trip where they have pen pals to the museum ... He didn't say anything especially except that he really enjoyed it, and he told me about the things that he saw (referring to the museum trip). He told me about a lot of different things, but I can't remember all of them that he saw. But he explained it fully ... In my opinion, it's more or less like an outside school. They get to learn and see things that they have never seen. It is a wonderful experience for all kids, I think. James had a pen pal and he wrote to him. He told me he got a chance to meet him and they ate lunch together and they had a lot of fun together."

A number of parents, incidentally, mentioned a very positive response to pen pal letters. It is generally agreed that children enjoy receiving letters and that having received one makes letter-writing a more meaningful kind of undertaking.

Some of the parents of Pattengill children had some recommendations to make about future projects. One of them suggested some after-school activities that would include everyone as a means of having some mixture of children "on a day-to-day basis." Her feeling was that "if we had a project like this, on a day-to-day basis, the future would have less problems." A second suggested more parental involvement, that it would be "a good thing if we could get more parents interested in this program as well as children—to go together and be friends." A third suggested that the pen pal letters needed some improvement; that the children should be encouraged to ask more questions and give more information about each other, so that when they met they would know more about the other. Note here that these suggestions were very similar to those made by the teachers and administrators.

Several of the parents of Pattengill children, during the course of their interviews, expressed concern about the quality of education their children were receiving. A number of them indicated that they felt truly quality education was not being offered their children at present. And several expressed the notion that the opportunity for improved education for their children would be greatly enhanced were the children to be in a racially mixed school setting.

Reactions of Livonia Parents

Three parents of third grade children in the Stark school were interviewed. These parents were informed of the project either through the teacher and principal at a small meeting of four mothers or at a tea for the mothers of all the children in the class. In the words of one of the mothers, the purpose of this tea was

> "to let the parents know and if there were any objections they could pull their children out at the time. This was before any of the field trips or any of the three schools getting together; and there were no objections at all. Everyone seemed to be quite happy with it."

Note, however, that the tea took place after there had been one exchange of letters. It was made clear to the parents that the Pattengill school was almost all Negro in population. Apparently, all of the children knew that they were going to meet Negro children from Detroit before the first trip was taken. One of the mothers said that she may have informed her child of this; the others indicated the children had been told at school.

The children met first on a trip to Plymouth and one mother who accompanied them indicates that her daughter

> "was excited about meeting her pen pal and their walking and she talked to Tonio (her pen pal) and talked to the other girls' pen pals and the boys.' And the second time was when I went to the Pattengill school. We took a tour through Pattengill ... I was amazed that they recognized their pen pals after just one meeting. And as soon as they saw them their eyes lit up and they grabbed for the hand and away they went to the playground; it was tremendous. I really was very impressed and the same when they came here."

The second mother says her daughter

> "excitedly was awaiting the first field trip and the excitement was high and this was their first experience at meeting their pen pals and they went to Plymouth."

She describes her daughter's reaction as follows,

> "Oh, she had a wonderful time ... She talkes about her pen pal but very casually as she would talk about any new person she was meeting; never a mention of color, never."

This mother says that it was her impression that the children did not have much time together. "They were so busy going from one place to another that I don't think they got to know each other that well." She says her daughter was excited about the second trip. She says,

> "These children had never seen a school like that (Pattengill); I did because I went to a school like that. I think that they could see the crowded conditions, quite a few children going to that school and we toured the school. Now my Beth... found her pen pal right away and hand in hand off they went."

Referring to the trip to Fort Wayne, she says,

> "I found it to be a most interesting place and the children played, really, most of the time. Oh, they had the cannons and the tanks and they just covered them and had a great time. We took them up on the area where you can look out at the river and they watched the boats; it was a very casual, happy time."

She adds,

> "I think some of the children may never have been down before (downtown Detroit). And so this was of interest to them. But I noticed that mostly they were just having a good time on the bus."

The third mother says that her daughter enjoyed the trip as she does all field trips but "did not make any great-to-do about it."

In terms of the value of the program, all of the mothers felt it had some academic value, though the degree to which they attributed educational merit to the program varied. One said, for example, in terms of what children might be learning about different communities,

> "I don't think any of them...were really much impressed with the big cities or the little towns or suburban living. They were all houses, all schools, all businesses, and they can see them any time ... I don't think that this makes much of an impression on kids, I really don't."

But another says,

> "I think that they are, at least third graders, are too young to do the sociological study of the city and how the metropolitan area grows. But this I feel gave them a much better picture because they could see for themselves and as far as I know, the six weeks before each field trip and the preparation for it was excellent."

She had preceded this with a statement that

> "...Education on this is a must and here we gave them an opportunity which some of us didn't have till we got to college, of learning about communities and how the city is formed and how from the inner-city come the circles out and out to finally the suburbs and into the rural areas. I grew up in Chicago and I didn't know there was a slum till I was in college; I was that protected and I think this is wrong."

The third says,

> "Oh, I believe that she has learned and she has enjoyed the trips and...the community type of learning that they were studying; everything tied in. And I think that she really did get more out of actually seeing the things than just reading about them."

In terms of the possible value of the program so far as children of different racial and socioeconomic levels getting to know each other, one mother says,

> "I really don't feel that they have any color barrier; they are children; children are children and it doesn't make any difference that they're blue, white or purple ... It didn't make any difference that they were Negro; all that they were interested in was their pen pal, girlfriend's or boyfriend's pen pal. They would get into little groups and I don't think, to them, it made any difference. I don't think that they were even aware of the fact that their skin was different. I think children are very tolerant; it's parents who teach children intolerance."

A second says, "...I have full confidence in what is being done as an educational project; it's the right thing."

Summing up her evaluation of the program, one mother says,

> "I think it would be a very good experience (to have other such projects) because it's only through being with different races and creeds and what have you that they're going to build a very good tolerance toward people in general ... I've been trying to teach my children that it doesn't make any difference what the color of the skin is or whether he belongs to a different church or different background; that people are people, no matter where you go. I have been trying to do this with my children and I feel this a very good thing for them because living out here we don't get into the city to have them go to different areas. You get too involved in your own little area."

She went on to recommend that the programs be started at an earlier grade level,

> "...maybe the second grade and continued right through high school. I think it would be a great thing for the kids to be able to do this each year, not perhaps with the same school but with different schools in Detroit."

She also says,

> "I think it's very good that they should learn about... different ethnic groups... so that they would learn the traditions and just what makes a group different."

Note that of these three parents who were interviewed, only one indicated that this experience afforded her child an initial contact with Negro children—both of the others had had previous social contacts with Negroes.

Three parents of the children in the fifth grade at the Stark school were similarly interviewed. Again, all of these parents said that their first information about the project came from the teacher. One, however, said that it was not clear to her, initially, that a school of Negro children was to be involved and that she found this out later through a neighbor. They all indicated that their children seemed to be quite excited and pleased with the pen pal letters. With reference to the trip to the International Institute, however, their opinions varied. Speaking of her son, one mother said,

> "He was interested in the idea of the pen pal and getting together to meet him and he said he liked that and he enjoyed part of the visit to the institute—the conversation

with the Spanish people. But other than that, he thought the trip was rather boring; he wasn't too interested in it, I mean. He said there wasn't anything to do, but he enjoyed the trip yesterday much better (to Plymouth for the tacos lunch.)"

A second mother says,

"I think they enjoyed it. Obviously there was a wonderful sense of cooperation; they were quiet and they listened carefully. I think that this was really a high point in the day (the folk-dancing at the International Institute.)"

In terms of educational value, one of the mothers says,

"Expense-wise, it would have been less expensive to bring the Institute people here for an experience in conversation. I think this is the part that my boy enjoyed most you know—speaking to someone who spoke a different language; he liked that the best ... If we could have brought some Spanish-speaking or other people out here to introduce them to this, but as for the general trip, I don't know. They looked at the displays and the costumes, but being a boy, I don't think he was too impressed."

She goes on to say,

"I think it is a good experience for them to meet on a friendly basis. As I said, I don't feel that it produced any sensational effects at all. I don't think that they were behaving out of the ordinary; in fact, they were all very well behaved generally, all of the children on the trip."

But she says, of her son, "I don't think it has affected him; he has kind of taken it as part of his experience." She felt that time was a problem on the trip to Plymouth saying,

"...I don't think they had much exchange between the students; I suppose on the walk they did though; they had a chance to converse on the walk..."

Another parent said,

"...this visit with these people that were actually from these foreign countries, was educational, enjoyable, and I think it left a wonderful impression; it breaks the barrier and the awful curse that goes with this word 'foreigner.'"

Her son apparently felt he had not had enough time to be with his pen pal; that they were together most on the playground. To her, the boy

> "...seemed to have taken it quite casually. I think that this is a good sign; I think had he been more disturbed about it that there would have been more conversation. I think that it's just that the relaxed attitude of just accepting came through.

She has an interesting comment:

> "One thing I would like to add, one comment that he made. He said that he was quite unhappy with the trip to Plymouth. He found the Plymouth children hard to get along with, verging on the point of being rude. One boy followed so closely on his heels that he kept pulling his shoes off deliberately and this disturbed Tommy and he came home telling me about it and he said really the colored children were politer."

One mother offered some insight into the reactions of other parents. She was one of the few to do so. She said,

> "Now yesterday, I know there was one girl from the class who, my daughter told me, had to stay at home because her parents wouldn't let her go ... I spoke with one of the mothers who went with a group yesterday and she said (I won't tell you her name) she thought it was really not much use. She said, 'Well, this was okey, but how far can you go with it; why bother?' She was very negative about it and I wondered why she bothered even to go along yesterday ... I got the impression she...didn't really want to mingle. It's like this editorial in the Observer that a little bit of civil rights is fine but don't get it too close to home. That's the impression I got from her."

This woman also suggested that more might be accomplished, the project might be improved if

> "perhaps you took smaller groups and got them together in a more personal way where a small group could get together and do something instead of just sitting together and watching a movie..."

Specifically, she suggested working on a project. While the same mother thought it would be fine to have her child involved in another such experience, the two other mothers were less positive in their reaction. One said,

> "I wouldn't object; I wouldn't want a lot of them (referring to projects) I mean along with the curriculum; maybe one a year or something but I wouldn't want to push a lot of them for any particular purpose unless it was felt that they would get something from the experiences."

The second says,

> "I find myself at a point of indifference; if he (her son) has the opportunity to participate, I'd say fine; if not, I'm not concerned about Tommy because I don't feel he has a problem in this area."

Reactions of Teachers

Introductions of the Programs and the Pen Pal Letters

Pen pal letters were exchanged by the children in all of the projects undertaken during the year. The teachers indicate, consistently, that the letters were a good vehicle for introducing the children to each other and many of them noted that the quality of the letters - their friendliness, the amount of information they contained, their personal tone - improved with each exchange. One teacher said her children "were somewhat disappointed when they received the letters." And when she discussed with them the possibility of a second trip together, about a quarter of the children

> "said that they would enjoy this; one-fourth said that they would enjoy the trip more with their own friends; and a large group said they didn't care one way or another - looking around to see how their friends were responding... Then they received much improved letters from the children - friendly and informative. Their feelings were much improved. Many answered their letters though I did not require it. These letters... really changed their feelings. They had felt that they were doing much of the offering and making overtures of sociability. Now with these friendly letters, they felt the others were also making efforts and overtures of friendship; they felt much better about the whole thing."

Some of the teachers told their students at the outset that they would be corresponding and visiting with children from different racial backgrounds; some used more indirect means and some did not mention racial differences at all. One of the Pattengill teachers took four of her children with her to deliver to the Stark school the books the Pattengill class had used and which they were sharing with the Stark children who had no such material. The children had already exchanged letters and the teacher portrayed quite vividly the excitement on the part of all of the children and all of the questions asked about their pen pals, but indicated that no mention was made of race either by her or by her pupils.

> "And when we got back... all my children were dying to know all about their pen pals so I let each of the four get up and tell what he had done. And they described the room and the desk; what the children were making in art. And they described different people's pen pals - 'She was tall and had blonde hair' - like this. But nobody made the statement that they were white children - none of the four of them. It wasn't that they weren't trying to say this. Nobody thought about it... Had they been older or had I

> spotted deep prejudices... I may have done this differently, but since they are just seven and they were so excited about their pen pals, I thought, 'Well, let it go and see what happens.'"

What happened was that on the first trip to Plymouth, one little girl, described as a child who is most enthusiastic about everything she does, was quite upset.

> "She didn't want anything to do with this pen pal. She said, 'You should have told me that she was white; I wanted a colored person for a pen pal. I didn't think you would give me a white pen pal.'* So I said 'Karen, you just think it over for a little while. You know, she hasn't changed any just because her color happens to be different from yours.' And she still wan't happy at all. The little girl from Livonia was just darling. She was so excited about meeting Karen. Karen is above average in intelligence and this child is also;... they are both Brownies. They had so much in common... Pretty soon... they were arm in arm and Karen just begged to stay a little while longer. She just didn't want to go home."

One suburban teacher said she "didn't think it was important" to tell the children that they were writing to Negro children and that many of the children found out about the race of their pen pals through their letters in which "complexion" was mentioned. At Starkweather, one teacher told her class they would be working "with an inner-city group in Detroit" and that this indicated to her pupils that these were Negro children. The second teacher, however, "told the children quite frankly that the children in Stark school were white and most of the children in Pattengill were Negro." Apparently, most, if not all, of the children just "accepted it"; the only reactions seemed to have been "interest and some curiosity."

A teacher at Pattengill circulated a newspaper article with a picture about the second-third grade shared learning project. Some of the children in her class said they thought the children from the other school were white, but "they said it did not make any difference."

> "On the day that the children from Livonia and Plymouth came to visit" (the second-third grade trip to Detroit) said another Pattengill teacher, "I told my children that they might like to go and look out the window—that some of the children were from the same school our pen pals were, but the word Negro or white was not mentioned."

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*The children apparently do not identify the teacher racially as a white teacher. In her words, "... you know, I don't think they realize, when they are talking about white people, that I am white, They know I'm not Negro, but I think I just appear."

The Starkweather teacher said that when he discussed the pen pal letters with his class,

> "I did not feel it was necessary to make a point of the fact that they were Negro boys and girls (although I suppose I was wrong at the time)... because I feel I could have approached the subject... in a much more positive attitude than I imagine many of the boys and girls received from home."

They found out "incidentally." Presumably, the names of some of the Pattengill children indicated to the Starkweather parents and children that they were Negro boys and girls, but the children voiced no objections when he (the teacher) talked about their pen pals being Negro and the suburban children responded enthusiastically to the letters.

> "They could hardly wait for the next letter and although we were in a learning situation of writing friendly letters, they had not responded greatly to this in the classroom. But now, they were eager to write. And my boys and girls went probably as high as three pen pals and they eagerly wrote, waiting for answers to their questions, eagerly writing answers to their questions sent in by the Pattengill boys and girls."

Observations on the Children's Responses

A number of teachers felt that the relationships among the children were much more meaningful on the second and third trips than on their first visits together. One teacher noted a "shyness or strangeness" at the first meeting which he felt was not unusual with children who were strangers. But, "by the second meeting, they were relaxed to the point that I had to speak to them several times to quiet them down, because their enthusiasm was just bubbling over..."

Despite any initial shyness, one of the Pattengill teachers said she "was very pleased with the warm reception." She said she was

> "a little concerned at first because we hadn't mapped out any particular way of getting the children together; and, because we had had a meeting the day before, I had not the opportunity to review with the children the names of their pen pals..."

When she discovered that some of the suburban children, as well as her own students, had forgotten the names of their pen pals, she was less embarrassed. But

> "yesterday when we went to the Plymouth school... I think it took less than five or seven minutes for them to get together... that went very, very smoothly."

Her children wrote compositions about their experiences and

> "the reactions, on the whole were very, very positive. Many of the children said they thought it was a good idea that they had a chance to meet white children because when they became grown-ups and they have to be around them all the time, they'll know how to get along with them. One of the children mentioned that she thought it was a good idea, that she really liked her pen pal and that she didn't care whether he was red, yellow or green; that she just liked him."

On the part of at least some of the children, the teachers report evidence of a desire to continue their relationships through further correspondence and possibly visits during the summer. One teacher says that a child in her class asked for a rose petal to include in one of her letters. Another teacher says she overheard three or four girls discussing the possibility that "they could get together this summer with their pen pals" and notes that a few children have written additional letters.

The class of second-grade children at Pattengill and the third-grade class at Stark school were brought "very close together" by the tragic death of a little girl from Pattengill—one of the children who visited Stark school to deliver the books the children shared. When the Stark children learned that Delathea was hospitalized, they "asked if they could make get-well cards." These were delivered to Delathea by her teacher the day before she died. The teacher at Stark said that, when she told her children of the little girl's death, she "was amazed at the sensitivity... There was a real sense of loss, there really was." The teacher at Pattengill said

> "... you could tell from the children's letters from Livonia that they felt it almost as strongly as we felt her death."

Most teachers agree that the children have been enthusiastic about the project.

> "They enjoyed the trip; they enjoyed meeting the children; receiving letters. They seem very enthusiastic. If I don't give them (the letters) to them first thing in the morning or if I tell them I have the letters, they want them right away. They want to read them and they want to answer them right away."

> "They just had a ball."

> "Before we left (on the first trip to Plymouth), they were very tense and nervous and you could tell they were apprehensive. When we got there, you could tell that the other children... were the same way—they weren't sure what

was coming and how it was going to be handled. They stayed with their pen pals throughout the rest of the field trip, and... they began to really share feelings... hold hands and really interact. It was really noticeable on the field trip to Detroit when they were able to sit and talk together. I think they got better acquainted, really, on the Detroit trip and got to know more personalities of all of the group—other people got to know other people's pen pals."

Observations of Parental Reactions

By and large, the teachers feel the parents of their students have been supportive of the program. One suburban teacher says

> "Without exception, I had either an agreeable response or an enthusiastic response to the point where some of the parents brought in materials... I have people calling, wanting to go on field trips... because the ones (parents) that went on the first field trip have sold it to everyone else... My mothers have commented on how pleased they were to be able to talk to the mothers of the other schools."

A Pattengill teacher reports,

> "I did send a two-page letter home explaining the whole project and about the pen pals these children were writing. I did explain... to the parents that this was an integration project and explained all the educational values to both children... I think I got 18 answers right the next day... (saying they would be happy to help). As it happened, we didn't have to ask them to take off, but two fathers said they would be more than happy to take off one day from work if we needed their support..."

The third teacher is aware of more parental anxiety, saying,

> "...Most of the parents expressed concern about going to Pattengill... They wanted to see exactly what the school was like. They didn't seem to care anything about what (the other suburban school) was like, but they had to know exactly what Pattengill was like."

She notes that, while all of the children were allowed to go on the first trip, three youngsters were not permitted to take the trip to Detroit.

Some of the parents of the Starkweather students were upset when they learned their children were corresponding with Negro children and telephoned the school, presumably to voice their objections. The telephone calls prompted a meeting after school of the parents and the faculty at which the program was explained. One teacher said,

> "There were some parents who did not want to have their children take part... and we assured them if they didn't want their child to take part in it, it was their prerogative."

Referring to the reaction of the three Plymouth parents who accompanied the children to the Detroit Historical Museum, the teacher says they were "quite enthusiastic." However, she notes that

> "one of the boys who had gotten along very well, liked his pen pal, and his pen pal had liked him, has a father who became opposed to the project and called several of my parents and other parents in an attempt to discourage such projects in the future. This child was not permitted to go on the next trip (the picnic). Apparently, they did not want us to know about these calls. I learned about them from another parent. None had a disagreeable time; no one regretted the trip."

On the other hand, the Pattengill teacher says that

> "on our first trip (to the museum), we had two parents along and they were quite pleased by the outcome of the trip. I don't think they anticipated any problems whatsoever. Well I don't think they would have, being Negro parents. I think that perhaps it would have been the other way around."

One of her colleagues at Pattengill makes the same kind of interesting comment - one which is supported by the observations of some of the Pattengill parents. The teacher says,

> "I did inform some of the parents (at parent-teacher conference)... to get their reaction and the reaction was just as I had anticipated - a very positive one. But I think that this indicates something about Negro parents. I think that oftentimes we are much more willing to accept these kinds of experiences than Caucasian parents are. I think many times we seem to feel as though there might be more of a positive gain from this particular kind of interaction. We don't have some of the other kinds of fears or at least we don't express these fears if we have them"

A teacher at Starkweather reported that

> "I had about five or six (children) that are not taking part in it. They're not taking part because their parents did not want them to. They would have enjoyed taking part in this."

She said, also, that

> "some of the people (who were opposed) were willing to have their children here when we had visitors, but not when they were on the field trip."

To another Starkweather teacher, the fact that relatively few parents attended the meeting

> "indicated that most of the parents weren't too disturbed, at least in my class, because the children all knew and I suggested they tell the parents and that was before the meeting with the parents was set up. We had, I can't remember how many mothers, but we had about six who were vocally opposed... and the rest were generally favorable."

At Stark school, one teacher said she talked about the program individually with about 80% of the parents during parent-teacher conferences and said she had "a very good response."

> "Some said nothing because they didn't know what to say, but they have all let their children participate and haven't held their children back. So I think that all the parents are going along with this. And I know some parents who are very forward with this kind of thing and who have said they were very, very pleased that they were doing this kind of thing."

Observations of the Reactions of Other Faculty Members

Reactions of members of the school staffs not involved in the programs vary. Interested and curious seem to describe the reaction of most of the other teachers. Most of the teachers from the suburban schools feel that the majority of their faculties are favorably disposed to the work, but

> "there are some negative feelings among the staff."
>
> "Some of them think that it's a waste of time to tell you the truth; you know—we should be in the classroom instead of taking all these trips... Others are interested in what's going on and what's happening. It kind of varies."

Teacher Exchange

The unit of work on Michigan involving two fourth-grade classes at Pattengill and a fourth-grade class at Starkweather was unique in that the teachers exchanged classes for a day. The Starkweather teacher taught one lesson on The Rocks of Michigan and one on Modern Math (a different system than the one taught regularly at Pattengill). One of the Pattengill teachers taught his class at Starkweather a lesson on Roman numerals and one taught a lesson on "tall tales."

All the teachers were enthusiastic about this exchange, feeling it was a stimulating and exciting experience. Both Pattengill teachers noted that their classes responded to the suburban teacher in a very positive and particularly warm manner.

Academic Value of the Programs

The extent to which the teachers attributed any educational merit to the shared learning experiences varied considerably, though most indicated that they felt there was academic value to the program. Superficially, at least, there appeared to be a positive relationship between the degree of coordination on the unit of work and the amount of educational value attributed to the program.

One of the teachers involved with the rocket club felt that the program had potentially great academic value because

> "we are going into much more detail with a small group than we could with a classroom and devoting more actual time with this project. The boys have chosen areas to report on, specialties to report on; they are doing this on their own - their own studying..."

Another teacher stressed the motivational aspect, saying,

> "...after my children saw the projects and the work which the (other) children did... they are not very anxious to try and do something on this order. I feel, in a sense, they are motivated because they know what their children are doing and want to do the same thing."

Several teachers spoke very positively about the academic value of the program.

> "I think this trip brought out a lot of interesting things that otherwise would have meant nothing to the children. Just reading them in a book, even though you point them out and you have a discussion, they mean so much more when the children can actually see them and participate in something like this,"

Another says,

> "It's been proved over and over again that a concrete object we remember much better than we remember something that is abstract. And when we are talking about a small town, it is abstract... We can talk about it and read about it in our books and the children would probably get some benefit out of this, certainly. But, oh, to go and see a small town! They really see exactly what a small town neighborhood is like... Even the tour of Detroit - many of the children hadn't been around that area with the skyscrapers and all the construction that's going on down there. This is something they are going to remember..."

One suburban teacher reported,

> "When we got back (from the Detroit trip), the boys came and found some books in the library about Detroit and its beginnings and got some history books and so forth that they wouldn't even have touched before. And they looked up changes in names... and how the name the fort (Fort Wayne) changed. We read a story in class together about Cadillac - about how he put up the first one (fort) and this got us into Pontiac and they began to say, 'That's why the cars are named this.' It related so well... We have wanted them to see first-hand how large cities develop along transportation and rivers. We read that in the book before we went down. And we can read and read, but until we see the congestion of transportation, railroad, trucking, warehousing along the riverfront, we don't get any idea. And they really saw that..."

It is interesting that a few of the teachers who were most convinced of the educational value of the program said they did more actual planning of their classroom work than they usually do, and many indicated that there was more than the usual amount of follow-up after the trip.

In the process of explaining her ambivalence as to the educational merit of the program, one of the teachers was refreshingly candid in evaluating her own performance.

> "From a teaching point of view, I think that, because the experience has been set up in the way that it is, I find myself being very enthusiastic about it; because... I know this is something that is going to be used. Therefore, I am particularly concerned about the way

> it is handled. You know, you want your children to be good representatives, of course, and because of this, you strive in an unusual way to see that they are... Now, from a teaching point of view, I felt that I did not have the time, or I did not take the time, to really deal with this particular subject that we are studying in depth. I feel, at this point, this particular aspect of it has not been good, although this was our original objective. I would be concerned if we were going to do a project like this again. I would want to have some additional time..."

Later, she speaks more specifically, saying she wished she had

> "involved the special teachers like the social studies teacher and the science teacher and, perhaps, the art teacher and the auditorium teacher... I would involve them in the project or I would try to arrange to get some ideas from them in terms of the kinds of things that I might do with these particular youngsters."

We should note here that this teacher's class is on a platoon system, that she is a homeroom teacher who is

> "not really concerned with the social studies per se. Social studies interests that come up in homeroom are incidental to the reading lesson..."

This teacher clearly kept her eyes and ears open and mentioned observing one or two techniques she hopes to be able to adapt and try.

Value of the Program in Terms of Intergroup Relations

The teachers are cautious about claiming any change in attitude on the part of the children as a result of their shared experiences, but all are positive in their comments and stress at least the potential value of the program in terms of the contacts between children of different races. As one of the teachers says,

> "It would certainly seem that it's given them an opportunity to meet other children - an opportunity which they really do not have."

The most frequently made observation concerns the fact that the children were able to discover their own similarities - in interests, family, school activities, fondness for "Batman" and the like.

> "Meeting these children and seeing that they had everything in common with them except their color - oh, their likenesses are so similar - I really think it gives them a real good feeling that we aren't so different and that we can get along together... 'I'm only seven years old, but I know I can get along with my pen pal and I know my pen pal likes me'... And I think this project would have fallen flat on the first visit if this hadn't been a sincere thing... the children could sense right away if it was phony. But those children really liked our children and our children really liked their pen pals... Once they get to know the other person, I think they are beginning to understand them. Once they begin to know somebody, you start to value them differently; you value them for what they are, how you feel about them, I suppose."

A teacher also cites one example of a possible growth in the children in her class. She says,

> "I did start to read a book which I had not previewed, which is not a very good thing to do. But it came recommended, so I started in on it. It was pioneering and this kind of thing. I didn't complete the book, but the remarks from some of the children were 'My, that puts the Indian in a bad light.' So they were actually able, several of them, to see this and I thought this was good."

One suburban teacher said,

> "This makes sense. It makes sense to the teachers; it makes sense to the children; it makes sense to the parents."

A Pattengill teacher said,

> "I think if we started this early enough, that children will accept each other as most children will if they didn't have these parents with these biased ideas... I think if we can do something to dispel this early and let them know that everybody is the same under the skin... basically, there is no difference... I feel that we need to educate our children of both races.'

Reactions of the Principals

The administrators of the Pattengill, Stark and Starkweather schools were extremely supportive of the programs and felt there was real value in such undertakings. Said one,

> "We feel that it is important for children to become acquainted with other children; to realize that they are like us no matter what color they are or from what background. We feel that this is the most important part of our teaching; that children learn understanding; that they are able to participate in this world with good understanding... for all people."

To the principal of the Pattengill school the programs were a means of counteracting negative attitudes of both Negro and white children with respect to each other. He said,

> "We merely wanted to get them believing that no child could be a whole child unless he had all kinds of experiences; that he could be just as crippled socially and intellectually because of this paucity of experience with others; that we certainly could do something for others by way of exposing them to children from a different culture - perhaps even a different socio-economic group."

Perceptions of Parental Reactions

With respect to the reactions of the parents, the principal at Starkweather said that, when she learned that a rumor was being circulated to the effect that there was a plan to bus the children to the Pattengill school, "for a full day's work everyday and that their children, in turn, were going to be sent out here in buses," she invited each of the 113 parents of children involved in the projects "to come to school to hear about it." She indicated that eleven parents came. Then, apparently,

> "The word went around the neighborhood that something was afoot. The superintendent was called, the president and vice-president of the PTA were called with a request that it be brought up at a PTA meeting. Very wisely, the officers said that this was a school project not a PTA project and they would not bring it up. The superintendent, of